

1 WE CLAIM:

2 1. A method of operation for a navigation system, the method comprising the  
3 steps of:

4 accessing a database that contains information about roadside signs and locations  
5 of said roadside signs;

6 determining at least one roadside sign in the vicinity of a vehicle in which a user  
7 of said navigation system is located; and

8 providing the user of said navigation system with the information about the  
9 roadside sign determined to be in the vicinity of the vehicle.

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11 2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

12 prior to the step of providing, accepting a request from the user of the navigation  
13 system for information about a roadside sign in the vicinity of the vehicle.

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15 3. The method of Claim 2 wherein said request from the user is made via a  
16 help button located on a user interface of said navigation system.

17

18 4. The method of Claim 1 wherein the roadside sign is a sign that has just  
19 been passed by the vehicle.

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21 5. The method of Claim 1 wherein said information includes a translation of  
22 the roadside sign into a selected language.

23

24 6. The method of Claim 1 wherein said information includes supplemental  
25 information relating to the roadside sign.

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27 7. The method of Claim 1 wherein said information includes commercial  
28 information relating to the roadside sign.

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30 8. The method of Claim 1 wherein said information is provided to the user  
31 audibly.

1           9.     The method of Claim 1 wherein said database is located in said vehicle.

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3           10.    The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

4               prior to the step of determining at least one roadside sign, determining a location  
5 of said vehicle.

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7           11.    The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of providing is performed  
8 automatically.

9

10          12.    The method of Claim 1 wherein said steps of accessing, determining, and  
11 providing are performed continuously as the vehicle is being driven so that the user is  
12 provided with information about each roadside sign of a plurality of roadside signs  
13 located along a road upon which the vehicle is being driven as each roadside sign is  
14 encountered.

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16          13.    The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

17               accepting a filter criterion from the user so that information about the roadside  
18 sign determined to be in the vicinity of the vehicle is provided to the user only if the filter  
19 criterion is satisfied.

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21          14.    The method of Claim 13 wherein said filter criterion relates to a subject  
22 matter of the roadside sign.

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24          15.    The method of Claim 13 wherein said filter criterion relates to a business  
25 chain.

26

27          16.    The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

28               accepting a filter criterion from the user,

29               and further wherein said steps of accessing, determining, and providing are  
30 performed continuously as the vehicle is being driven along a road so that the user is  
31 provided with information about each roadside sign that satisfies the filter criterion as

1 each such roadside sign is encountered along the road upon which the vehicle is being  
2 driven

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4 17. A method of obtaining additional information about roadside signs while  
5 traveling in a vehicle, the method comprising the steps of:

6 as the vehicle is traveling along a road, receiving a wireless transmission relating  
7 to a roadside sign, wherein said wireless transmission includes additional information  
8 about said roadside sign; and

9 presenting said additional information to a driver of said vehicle.

10

11 18. A navigation system comprising:

12 a database that includes data identifying locations of roadside signs and associated  
13 information about said roadside signs;

14 programming that determines a location of a vehicle;

15 programming that uses said database to identify at least one roadside sign close to  
16 said location of said vehicle; and

17 a user interface that provides to a user of said navigation system said associated  
18 information from said database about the at least one roadside sign.

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20 19. The invention of Claim 18 wherein said user interface further comprises:

21 a help button accessible to the user by which the user can request the navigation  
22 system to provide additional information about roadside signs.

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24 20. The invention of Claim 18 wherein said associated information includes  
25 translations of sign text into alternative languages.

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